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**NEW DEFENDANT MAKES INITIAL APPEARANCE IN CASE
INVOLVING SCHEME TO SELL VISAS**

SACRAMENTO--McGregor W. Scott, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California, and Christopher A. Wray, Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, announced today that KIM CHI LAM, 53, of Gardena, California, made her initial appearance in the United States District Court in Los Angeles, California, late Monday afternoon following her arrest that morning in Gardena, California. LAM, who was indicted by a federal grand jury in a second superseding indictment filed in Sacramento, California, on February 5, 2004 is charged with conspiring to defraud the United States and to bribe public officials and to commit visa fraud. The indictment, which was initially sealed, was unsealed Monday.

Defendant LAM appeared Monday afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Walsh in Los Angeles, who set her bail at \$100,000, to be fully secured by the deeding of property. Defendant LAM was remanded into custody pending the posting of bail and ordered to be transported to Sacramento after February 17, 2004.

LAM is one of eleven persons, including two former State Department employees, charged with participating in an alleged corrupt scheme to sell visas to enter the United States that operated out of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka. According to the superseding indictment, LAM paid tens of thousands of dollars in bribes to defendants ACEY R. JOHNSON, 32, who was until last year a Consular Associate employed in the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka, and LONG N. LEE, 51, his spouse, a State Department Foreign Service Officer and career State Department employee. In exchange for the bribe payments from LAM and other defendants, JOHNSON and LEE allegedly arranged for JOHNSON to issue visas to various foreign nationals, primarily from Vietnam and India.

In addition to defendants JOHNSON, LEE, and LAM, the other defendants facing charges in connection with the alleged scheme are VINESH PRASAD, 33; MINESH PRASAD, 28; and NARINDERJIT SINGH BHULLAR, 40, all of Sacramento; PHUONG-HIEN LAM TRINH, 35, of Torrance, California, LAM's daughter; and DAVINDER SINGH BHULLAR, 44, who is believed to be in India. Three defendants, RAJWANT S. VIRK, 46, of Herndon, Virginia, RACHHPAL SINGH, 32, of Newark, California, and RAMESH K. JAISINGH, 57, of

Fairfax, Virginia, have previously pleaded guilty in Sacramento to conspiracy to defraud the United States.

The case is being prosecuted in U.S. District Court in Sacramento by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and S. Robert Tice-Raskin of the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Trial Attorney Noah D. Bookbinder of the Public Integrity Section, headed by Noel L. Hillman, Chief.

The next appearance in the case for all defendants is scheduled for February 20, 2004, before U.S. District Court Judge Garland E. Burrell in Sacramento.

The case is the product of an extensive investigation conducted by the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. Department of State, and by agents with the FBI and several other state and federal agencies associated with the Joint Terrorism Task Force for the Eastern District of California, including the California Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Bureau of Immigration Control and Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security. Sri Lankan law enforcement authorities also provided assistance in the investigation.

The United States Attorney's Office and the Department of Justice noted that the charges in the superseding indictment are only accusations, and that the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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